

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 6345

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SUBJECT: REGIONALLY-FOCUSED SPEECHES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: (A) STATE 176956, (B) LIMA 5036

1. THE PUBLIC REACTION OF THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT TO OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES HAS BEEN ONE OF RESTRAINED APPROVAL, PARTLY BECAUSE RESPECT FOR INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON AND THE COMMITMENT TO BASIC ECONOMIC RIGHTS COINCIDE WITH PRECEPTS OF THE PERUVIAN REVOLUTION. THE GOP'S RELATIVELY GOOD RECORD IN THIS FIELD AND THE DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AT A TIME OF ECONOMIC CRISIS HAVE ALSO BEEN FACTORS. THE DEGREE OF RESTRAINT IN THESE REACTIONS IS UNDERSTANDABLE IN LIGHT OF THE DELICATE STATE OF REGIONAL RELATIONS INVOLVING CHILE, ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL.

2. PRIVATELY, SOME GOP OFFICIALS ARE MILDLY CRITICAL AND RATHER UNEASY ABOUT VARIOUS ASPECTS OF OUR POLICIES. THEY WERE STUNG BY THE EXPRESSION OF CONCERN WITH RESPECT TO LIMITATIONS ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN OUR STATEMENT ON THE RECENT ELECTION, AN EXPRESSION THEY BELIEVE UNJUSTIFIED GIVEN THE CHAOTIC SITUATION CREATED BY THE GENERAL STRIKE. THERE IS ALSO A SUSPICION THAT WE ARE UNDULY INFLUENCED BY LEFTIST PROPAGANDA DIRECTED AT THE CURRENT GOP AND DISSEMINATED

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ABROAD. (THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAS SHOWN PARTICULAR INTEREST IN CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR IN HUGO BLANCO'S TOUR OF THE U.S. AND THE KIND OF RECEPTION HE GOT THERE.) A VERY FEW OF THE MILITARY IN THE GOP TAKE THE LINE FAMILIAR IN THE SOUTHERN CONE THAT CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS TRANSLATES INTO PRO-COMMUNISM. FINALLY, THERE IS A RESIDUAL FEAR AMONG MANY PERUVIANS, CIVILIANS AND MILITARY ALIKE, OF U.S. INTERVENTIONISM --

A FEAR THAT TENDS TO CREATE A NERVOUS SUSPICION THAT WHAT IS TODAY AN ACTIVE U.S. INTEREST IN ELECTIONS AND OTHER FACETS OF HUMAN RIGHTS MIGHT TOMORROW BECOME AN EFFORT TO IMPOSE SOLUTIONS TO THESE AND SUCH OTHER PROBLEMS OF THE REGION AS BORDER DISPUTES.

3. MOST OF THE MARXIST LEFT HERE CONTINUES TO FOLLOW HUGO BLANCO'S EXAMPLE IN DENOUNCING OUR PRESIDENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES AS A SHAM AND A TRICK. WE HAVE HAD INDICATIONS THAT PRIVATE OPINIONS IN THAT QUARTER ARE MORE MIXED, BUT PERUVIAN POLITICS IS SCARCELY AT AT STAGE WERE "REVOLUTIONARIES" COULD EXPRESS PUBLIC APPROBATION OF ANY USG POLICY. THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES HERE, FROM RIGHT TO LEFT, HAVE ALMOST UNIVERSALLY WELCOMED OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES, AND MANY PRIVATE CITIZENS HAVE EXPRESSED, IN A WIDE VARIETY OF FORA, THEIR SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT CARTER IN THIS FIELD. THIS EMBASSY ROUTINELY READS AND RESPONDS TO LETTERS WRITTEN BY PERUVIANS TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND HIS FAMILY, MANY OF WHICH REQUEST SPECIAL FAVORS OR THE HRESIDENT'S INTERVENTION IN PERSONAL MATTERS. VIRTUALLY ALL OF THESE LETTERS MAKE SOME FAVORABLE ALLUSIONS TO THE ADMINISTRATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. IN ADDITION, IN OUR CONTACTS WITH CHILEAN POLITICAL REGUGEES IN PERU WHO SEEK RESETTLEMENT IN THE US AND ELSEWHERE, POSITIVE REFERENCES TO OUR HUMAN RIGHTS STANCE ARE ALSO FREQUENTLY MADE.
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4. THE MOST CRITICAL HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN PERU IS THAT OF WIDE-SPREAD MALNUTRITION, ESPECIALLY AMONG INHABITANTS OF THE SLUMS OF PERU'S MAJOR CITIES. THIS CONDITION HAS BEEN AGGRAVATED BY THE AUSTERITY MEASURES THAT THE GOP HAS ADOPTED TO SECURE IMF LOANS AND APPROVAL AND TO BEGIN THE LONG AND DIFFICULT RETURN TO A STABLE ECONOMY. OFFICIAL AND NONOFFICIAL PERUVIANS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REGARD THE USG RESPONSE TO THIS HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM WITH GREAT INTEREST. A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THIS CONCERN CAN BE FOUND IN AMBASSADOR SHLAUDEMAN'S CONVERSATION WITH MAJORITY PARTY LEADER APRA'S VICTOR RAUL HAYA DE LA TORRE (REF B). IN THE CASE OF PERU WE HAVE STATED OFTEN AND EFFECTIVELY OUR CONCERN FOR BASIC CIVIL LIBERTIES; THROUGH THE AID PROGRAM (ESPECIALLY PL480) WE ARE TRYING TO DEMONSTRATE THE EQUAL CONCERN OF THE USG FOR THE RIGHT OF PEOPLE TO VITAL NECESSITIES SUCH AS FOOD AND SHELTER. IN THE PERUVIAN CONTEXT THESE LATTER EFFORTS ARE OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE IN GIVING SUBSTANCE TO OUR CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.
SHLAUDEMAN

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